

On the Abenaki Trail

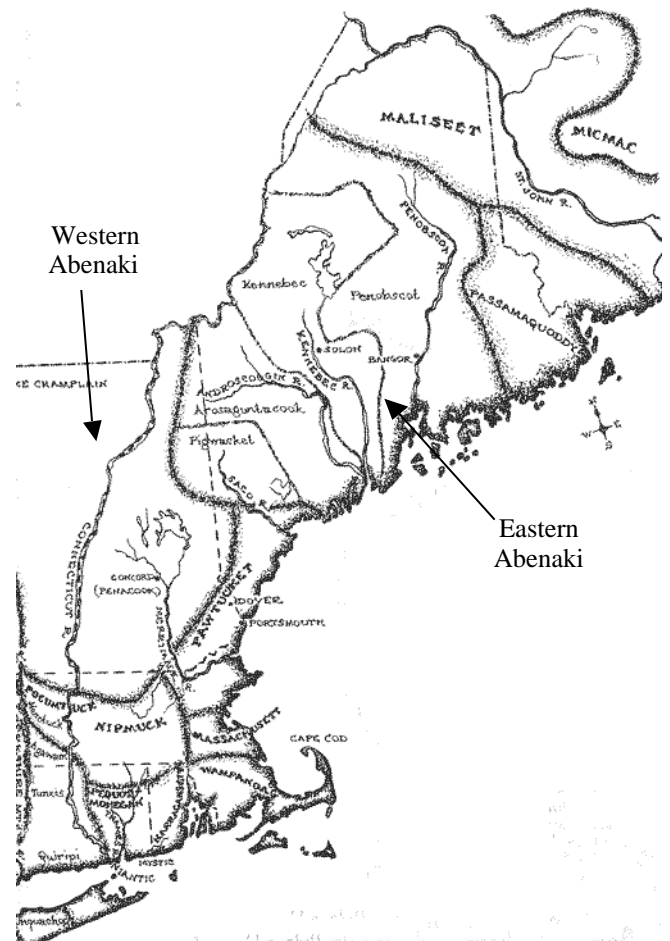
For the Study of Native Americans Living in New Hampshire before the Arrival of Europeans

Background

The first people in North America are believed to have come here by crossing the Bering Straits (show location on map or globe if possible) at least 17,000 years ago. These people followed the herds of animals they hunted and eventually peopled the North American continent.

The native peoples who settled throughout the continent spoke many different languages, had different customs, and had different forms of governing themselves. The major group that settled in most of what is today Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine were called *Abenaki*, the “People of the Dawnland.” We know that the Abenaki have lived in this area for as long as 1,000 years. It was these people, the Abenaki, that English and French explorers and settlers met when they first arrived on New Hampshire shores.

In some states, Indians live on reservations, which are lands set aside by the federal government for their use. Many of the Abenaki have migrated to Quebec. While New Hampshire has no native people living on reservations, Abenaki and other native peoples live in our towns, cities, and villages.



Modification of an illustration: “The Pre-Contact New England Tribes – 1600 A.D.”
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Objectives

1. To introduce students to the life ways of New Hampshire's Woodland Indians.
2. To examine objects that would have been used by Native Americans.
3. To discuss the changes in Abenaki life brought about by contact with Europeans.

Information and Activities

Read and review with your students the information to be found in other documents on the New Hampshire Historical Society's Web site (<http://www.nhhistory.org>) or on its CD-ROM.

(Special credit for much of this information goes to C. Keith Wilbur for his invaluable resource, *The New England Indians*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1978). Here is a list of subjects:

Calendar

"Circle of Life" (with activities), "Western Abenaki Calendar," "My Calendar," "The Corn Calendar."

Language

"The Spoken Word," "Names and Signatures," "Make Your Own Mark" (with activities).

- Review placenames listed in "The Spoken Word," then find maps that highlight your region or county. Have students find geographical names that derive from Native American words. What sort of geographical names seem to derive from Native American language? What sort from English? (Often, natural landmarks retain their Native American names, while political entities are English in origin.) You may wish to have students look for original town names in the "Guide to Archives" on the Division of Records Management and Archives site (<http://www.state.nh.us/state/guide.html>). Some towns originally had Abenaki names, e.g., Concord was Penacook and Keene was Ashuelot.
- Review "Names and Signatures." Have students create signatures for themselves using the suggestions on the page "Make Your Own Mark."

Hunting and Fishing

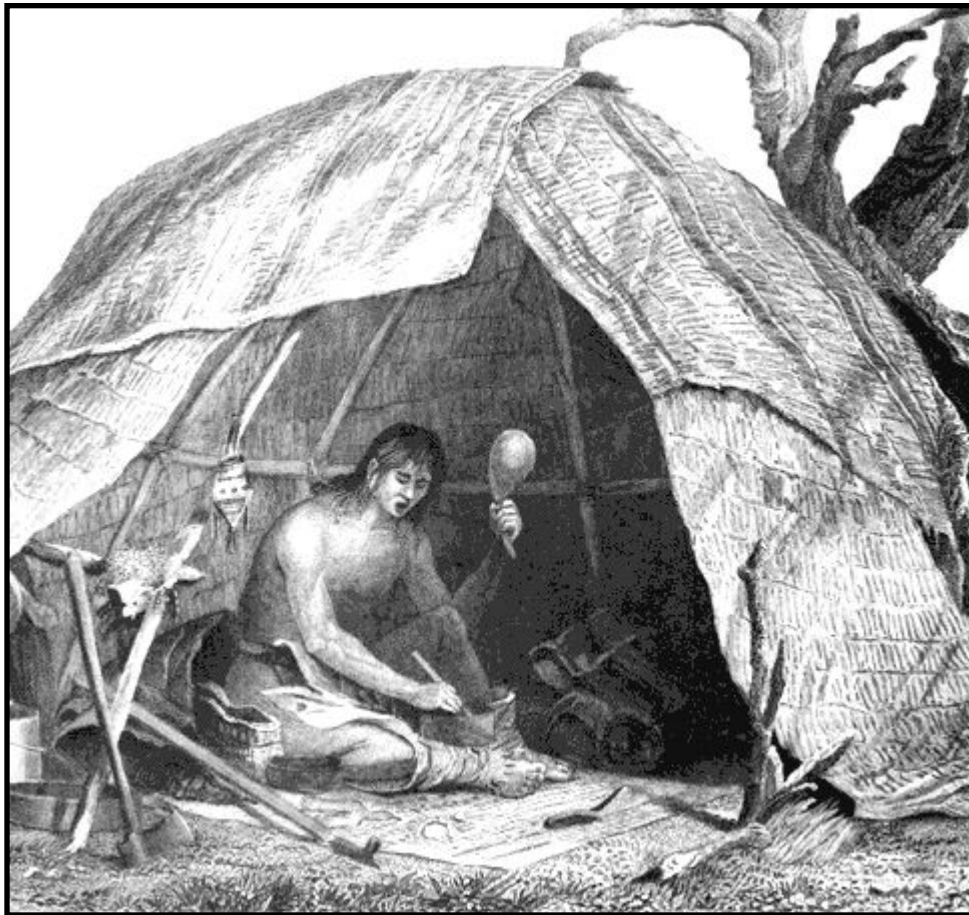
“Hunting,” “Fishing, “Stalking Animals” (with an activity).

Plants and Food Preparation

“Some Wild Plants Used by New England Indians,” “Grinding Corn: Mortar and Pestle,” “Food Drying” (with an activity).

Stone and Wood

“Working with Stone,” “Dugout Canoes.”



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